

## **Norwich area museums committee**

Date: **Tuesday, 08 December 2020**  
Time: **14:00**  
Venue: **Remote**

### **For further information please contact:**

#### **Committee members:**

##### **Norwich City Council:**

Councillors Huntley (chair), Maxwell, McCartney-Gray, Price, Schmierer and Wright

##### **Norfolk County Council:**

Councillors Brociek-Coulton (vice chair), Clipsham, Jones (B), Nobbs, Ward and Watkins

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#### **Co-opted non-voting members:**

Brenda Ferris (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society), Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund) and Felicity Devonshire (Friends of the Norwich Museums), Councillor King (Broadland District Council) and Councillor Easter (South Norfolk Council)

### **Information for members of the public**

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For information about attending or speaking at meetings, please contact the committee officer above or refer to the council's website.



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## Agenda

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### 1 Apologies

To receive apologies for absence

### 2 Public questions/petitions

To receive questions / petitions from the public.

Please note that all questions must be received by the committee officer detailed on the front of the agenda by **10am on Thursday, 3 December 2020.**

Petitions must be received by the committee officer detailed on the front of the agenda by **10am on Monday, 7 December 2020**

For guidance on submitting public questions or petitions please see appendix 1 of the council's constitution.

### 3 Declarations of interest

(Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting)

### 4 Minutes

1 - 6

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2020.

### 5 Norwich Museums Briefing - September to November 2020

7 - 26

To receive the report on the activities of the Norwich Museums for the period September to November 2020.

Date of publication: **Monday, 30 November 2020**







**Norwich Area Museums Committee**

**14:00 to 16:00**

**8 September 2020**

Present:

City Councillors:  
Huntley (chair)  
Grahame  
Maxwell  
McCartney-Gray  
Price  
Schmierer

**County Councillors:**

Brociek-Coulton (vice chair)  
Jones  
Ward

**Co-opted non-voting members:**

Felicity Devonshire (Friends of Norwich Museums), Brenda Ferris (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society), Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund) and Councillor King (Broadland District Council)

Apologies:

City Councillor Wright, County Councillors Clipsham, Nobbs and Watkins (other council business); and Councillor Easter (South Norfolk Council)

(The chair welcomed Councillor David King to his first meeting of the committee. Councillor King would be representing Broadland District Council as a non-voting member of the committee.)

**1. Public questions/petitions**

There were no public questions or petitions.

**2. Declarations of interest**

None.

**3. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2020.

**4. Norwich Museums Briefing – March to August 2020**

The assistant head of museums by way of introduction explained that the purpose of the report was to update members on the impact of Covid-19 on the museums service and the three Norwich museums in particular, and to brief members on the mitigation or actions that have been put in place. There was also an update on the Norwich Castle project which, not unsurprisingly, had also been impacted by the

pandemic. The report was presented in sections by the assistant head of museums, the operations manager and the learning team manager.

The assistant head of museums presented the first section of the report. Norfolk Museums Services (NMS) closed all its museums in line with government guidance on 19 March 2020. The majority of staff were working from home, with some staff involved in the wider county council response to the Covid-19 emergency. During the closure staff have developed a broad range of digital resources to increase access to collections, particularly for children and families. Other resources had also been developed as it was appreciated that there were some people, particularly some young people, without easy access to digital content. Members could request to be added to the distribution list "Museums Mardle" an electronic newsletter issued originally aimed to staff to keep them informed but was of interest to a wider audience.

The assistant head of museums asked that it be put on record his enormous gratitude to those staff who had been so actively involved in all of the hard work to prepare the sites for reopening, which as members could appreciate was a complex task and it was pleasing to see visitors at these sites. The report set out the measures undertaken by the NMS to reopen the museums in accordance with agreed procedures with the county council's health and safety and wellbeing team and following sector specific guidance (National Museums Directors Council). NMS had prioritised the reopening of the three larger sites: Time and Tide, Gressenhall, and Norwich Castle. Strangers' Hall and the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell would be reopening at a later date. Norwich Castle had been available to pass holders and Friends who pre-booked visits from 24 August 2020, which was later than the other two sites because of the construction works. The castle was not yet open to general public but when it was safe to do so would be extended to them as well.

The operations manager presented the second section of the report and explained the arrangements in place for the reopening of Norwich Castle to the public. The Wider Impact Group had always planned for a reduced offer to visitors to Norwich Castle during the construction phase of the Norwich Castle project. He referred members to the plans included in the report and explained that it was necessary to have separate visitor entrances and exits to comply with government and council guidance for the opening of public buildings. There were currently hoardings in place whilst pipes for the toilet facilities in the Rotunda were installed and this prevented access to the first floor. The completion of this work was expected in October and would enable parts of the first floor to be reopened to visitors, including the Timothy Gurney Gallery and a section of the Regimental Collections, which would be of interest to paying visitors. Due to the construction works and Covid-19, it was necessary to control the number of visitors at Norwich Castle at any one time through booked tickets and the introduction of a mini-one way system on the first floor. This had further reduced the offer from the planned 420 visitors to 126 visitors in Norwich Castle at any one time. Members were referred to the plan showing the entrances for wedding parties and noted that weddings had recommenced from 25 July in the Colman Gallery, with an average of two ceremonies per day. The offer was much reduced with wedding parties being restricted to the couple and 10 guests, facilitated by registrars. It was working well.

The assistant head of museums provided details of the increase in digital activity to deliver access to the museums and collections.<sup>1</sup> NMS staff had always sought to engage with members of the public through social media platforms. During the lockdown NMS had published 47 different videos on its YouTube channel including the *Lockdown Living Room Escape Room* challenge. It had also built on existing audiences increasing the number of views to a wider audience with 134,000 views recorded during this period across YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. Norwich Castle had seen an increase of 36 percent views on Instagram. There were 3,000 new followers for the three Norwich museums on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The Museum of Norwich had received 142,000 tweets on Twitter for *Picture in the Pandemic* compared with 35,000 tweets prior to lockdown. It was a credit to the Learning team who had tailored social media to the public appetite such as a nostalgic 20<sup>th</sup> century photo exhibition including one of key workers (nurses, shop workers and carers). The Norwich Castle Blog had been launched with 22 posts to date with over 2,500 views.

During discussion, a member suggested that there was an opportunity to display the museums' collections to a wider audience by using vacant shop windows, taking into consideration security and other factors. The assistant head of museums welcomed this idea commenting that the model of the castle, that had been a popular feature in the Keep, was now on display in the Castle Quarter to remind shoppers of the proximity of the castle. The vice chair pointed out the success of art projects where artwork was displayed in shop fronts. Members also noted the collaboration with Archant over the summer.

In reply to a member's question, the assistant head of museums said that the loss of income generated through admission charges would have a significant impact on NMS and the Keep Project. NMS had made an application to the ACE Cultural Recovery Fund. The county council was closely monitoring the financial impact of Covid-19 on this, as with all its services, and reported to members as appropriate. Members were advised that the financial detail of the service was not usually reported to this committee but, subject to protocol, members could be provided with information on the overall position.<sup>2</sup>

During discussion members commented on the arrangements for pre-booking tickets. The assistant head of museums service said that in practice where people who had not booked for Gressenhall or Time and Tide had been accommodated where timeslots were available. The operations manager and the assistant head of museums explained the reasons for initially reserving admittance at Norwich Castle to passholders because the offer was currently constrained by the current phase of Norwich Castle project and Covid-19 requirements. The general public would be admitted when there was a good quality visitor experience to offer and value for money could be assured. The price structure for admission to Norwich Castle, when members of the public were admitted, would reflect the reduced offer and was commensurate to the price structure and offer at Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell (ie approx. 40 per cent less than the regular admission charges for Norwich Castle).

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<sup>1</sup> [Headline social media statistics](#)

<sup>2</sup> It was subsequently confirmed that financial reports are made to the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee. Members could access these financial reports via the relevant committee pages on the Norfolk County Council's website .

The learning manager presented the presented third section of the report which highlighted the activities of the Norwich Museums Learning Team and continue to develop its programmes for priority and targeted audiences through new modes of engagement. Members were advised that the team had been proactive in contacting all schools which had booked sessions that had to be cancelled by sending them a pack of resources to help teachers deliver the curriculum. As part of the recovery programme, the appetite for taking children out of a school setting had changed and therefore the team was developing its virtual schools offer and making videos, the first of which would be available at the end of the month. The team was calling on advice from the sector and was working in collaboration with Norfolk schools. The feasibility of holding visits for school bubbles after half-term was being considered. The summer programme for families with children aged 6 to 11 years' old could not be held on site whilst museums were closed and been held online and digitally, including in collaboration with Children's Services. As part of the programme, Kick the Dust had delivered 400 art packs to children to engage in arts and craft activities. Online workshops meant that families that could not usually attend activities at Norwich Castle could participate. Discussions were being held with the YMCA about re-engaging its residents through the equivalent of a bubble class with Kick the Dust. Collaboration between the Keep project learning and engagement officer and the Norwich Kick the Dust project worker meant that there was a programme of activities for this year's Looked After Children Summer School, including a pack of activities with awareness that digital poverty was a barrier for participation.

The assistant head of museums commented that the Kick the Dust project provided a long term legacy for young people and that it was vitally important to continue the partnership at this time. There had been 700 interventions for a total of 250 young people during the lockdown. Other statistics were contained in the report.

In reply to a member's question, the assistant head of museums confirmed that, as discussed at the last meeting, an artist had been commissioned to provide attractive graphics on the hoardings leading to Norwich Castle. Not all of the hoardings had been erected yet and it did not seem appropriate to overtly advertise whilst the museum was only partially open but would be completed to coincide with the opening to the general public.

The assistant head of museums then provided an update to members on the progress of the Norwich Castle "Palace Reborn" project. The construction contract had been awarded to Morgan Sindall Construction who had taken possession of the site (construction zone) on 10 August 2020. The delivery plan had been revised to assimilate the impact of Covid-19 and ensure that working practices were Covid-secure. The works in the Rotunda had been brought forward because of the small number of visitors in September. This meant that when Norwich Castle was open to the public, the whole of the Rotunda and the new toilet facilities would be available for visitors. Piling for the large tower crane was currently being undertaken. This would serve as a large advertising hoarding for the project. Residents could keep up to date on the progress of the project on the website<sup>3</sup>. The Norwich Castle Tapestry volunteers had now completed over 14 thousand hours of work on the tapestry throughout the lockdown period.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/norwich-castle/castle-keep-transformation>



In reply to a question, the assistant head of museums explained that it was proposed to provide a small pop-up retail area at the Rotunda desk when the hoardings were removed. There was also a pop-up catering facility ready to provide hot drinks, cakes and sandwiches. The café at Gressenhall was currently providing a takeaway service. The problem in the Rotunda was that people would be sitting in a limited space with other visitors passing through and it was therefore considered difficult to manage within Covid-secure guidelines.

Discussion ensued on staffing. In response to a question, the assistant head of museums said that furloughed catering and retail staff were returning to work as museums reopened. They were also being deployed to assist with additional cleaning services and provide support and guidance to visitors. Staff were being supported as they returned to the workplace or whilst working at home. In reply to a member's question, the assistant head of museums said that the NMS had a good record of supporting apprenticeships and trainees and an apprentice scheme could be considered. Ten museum trainees had been appointed in April. They had received online support but most of the trainees had not yet been on site and therefore their appointments would be extended by a further 6 months.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) note the [report](#);
- (2) record the committee's gratitude to the NMS staff for their delivery of the service during the lockdown and closure of the museums as a result of Covid-19, and the hard work undertaken to reopen the museums.
- (3) remind members that they can receive "Museums Mardle" on request.
- (4) ask the assistant head of museums to consider:
  - (a) sharing financial information on the NMS with members (see footnote 2 above);
  - (b) potential to use shop fronts to display items from the museum's collections;
  - (c) provide details of the [statistics on social media](#).

## **5. Friends of the Norwich Museums**

Felicity Devonshire presented the report which provided members with a summary of the recent activities of the Friends of the Norwich Museums. (A copy of the [report](#) is available on the Norwich City Council website with the papers for the meeting.)

In the report the committee was advised that the Friends had elected a new Chairman, Charles Bingham Newland, an art expert, who began his tenure in May. The Friends had continued to plan for their centenary in 2021. Lord Cholmondely, Patron of the Friends of the Norwich Museums, would be hosting a buffet luncheon at Houghton Hall for the Friends. Also in its centenary year, the Friends were sponsoring an exhibition of the work of John Crome at Norwich Castle, to mark the

bicentenary of his birth. The exhibition would run from April to September and would be of international, national and local interest. The Friends would also be promoting its work during the centenary year with a view to attracting new members and would have a presence at the Forum during the Heritage Opening Days' week.

**RESOLVED** to thank Felicity Devonshire for the report and note it.

CHAIR

Norwich Area Museums Committee 8 December 2020

**Norwich Museums Update: September to November 2020**

**1. COVID-19 Service update**

- 1.1 All Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) museums closed to visitors on 19 March 2020 as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The majority of NMS non frontline staff have been working remotely from home since this time. Following a phased COVID-secure reopening of four NMS museum sites including Norwich Castle during July and August, all NMS closed again from 5 November as part of the second national lockdown. Following the announcement that Norfolk will be in Tier 2, three NMS sites will now reopen to the public on Thursday 3 December. These sites are Norwich Castle, Time & Tide Museum and Lynn Museum. The seasonal site at Gressenhall will remain closed until the start of the 2021 season.
- 1.2 Many museum activities and services, including general visits and school visits, have been severely impacted due to COVID-19. NMS staff have been involved in supporting key work relating to the Norfolk County Council's (NCC) COVID-19 response, including helping to coordinate volunteer activities, managing the distribution of food and medicine to residents who needed this support, and making telephone calls to identified vulnerable residents.
- 1.3 Throughout the period of the pandemic, NMS staff have developed a broad range of digital resources to support audiences, including resources for children and families. Digital engagement included a significant expansion of social media activity. Resources continue to be made available for those in digital poverty or without ready access to digital content.
- 1.4 The enormous range of NMS activity during the period of COVID-19 disruption continues to be captured in the weekly *Museums Muddle* staff e-newsletter. A reminder that members of the committee can be added to this distribution list on request.
- 1.5 Following the Government announcement that museums could legally reopen from 4 July with suitable COVID-19 security measures in place, four NMS sites – Norwich Castle, Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse, Time & Tide Museum and Lynn Museum successfully reopened to visitors. This reopening followed the implementation of strict COVID-19 safety procedures that were reviewed and signed-off by the NCC Health & Safety and Wellbeing team. Reopening was also in accordance with sector-specific guidance issued by the National Museums Directors Council. Time & Tide and Gressenhall reopened to Museums Pass holders and Friends on 18 and 20 July respectively, prior to opening to the general public on 3 August. Norwich Castle opened on 24 August to Museums Pass holders, Friends and other key stakeholder groups and then to the public on 16 October. Lynn Museum reopened to the public on 10 October. All visits were pre-booked using timed tickets available from the Art Tickets website. To accommodate social distancing, site visitor capacity was significantly reduced. All sites closed from 5 November.

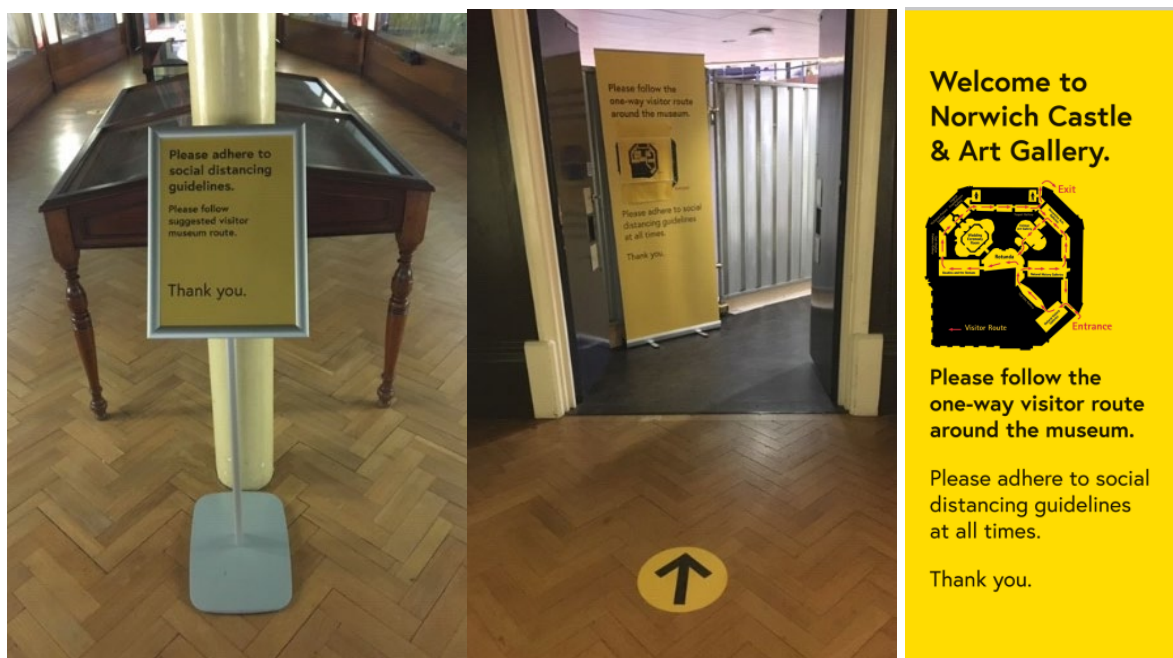
- 1.6 Staff training has taken place at all sites in advance of reopening. Staff are provided with any identified PPE and protective screens have been installed at key points. Enhanced staffing levels ensure that visitors can be provided with the necessary support and advice. Refresher training is being scheduled for staff ahead of the planned 3 December reopening of sites.
- 1.7 Planning work is also underway regarding the reopening of other NMS sites including the Museum of Norwich and Strangers' Hall, initially for the resumption of limited face to face activity with schools and young people when the delivery of this activity is deemed to be safe.

## **2. Reopening at Norwich Castle**

### **2.1 Museum reopening arrangements**

From Monday 24 August the ground floor of Norwich Castle was opened initially to pre-booked Museums Pass holders, Friends and other key stakeholder groups. This was followed by the Castle being opened to general visitors from Friday 16 October.

Visitors are continuing to use the entrance door E8 as the temporary COVID-19 entrance (please see the Castle plan below). Visitors using wheelchairs or with pushchairs can enter via door E9. The temporary visitor exit is via door E6. Visitors tour the building by following a recommended one-way route. Visitors are also able to access toilets. Visitors and staff are required to wear a face covering in areas accessible to the public and to adhere to a 2 metre safe social distance. To aid this, clear and distinctive COVID signage and floor markings have been installed throughout the museum to guide visitors through the one-way systems, as well as to the toilets and the exit.

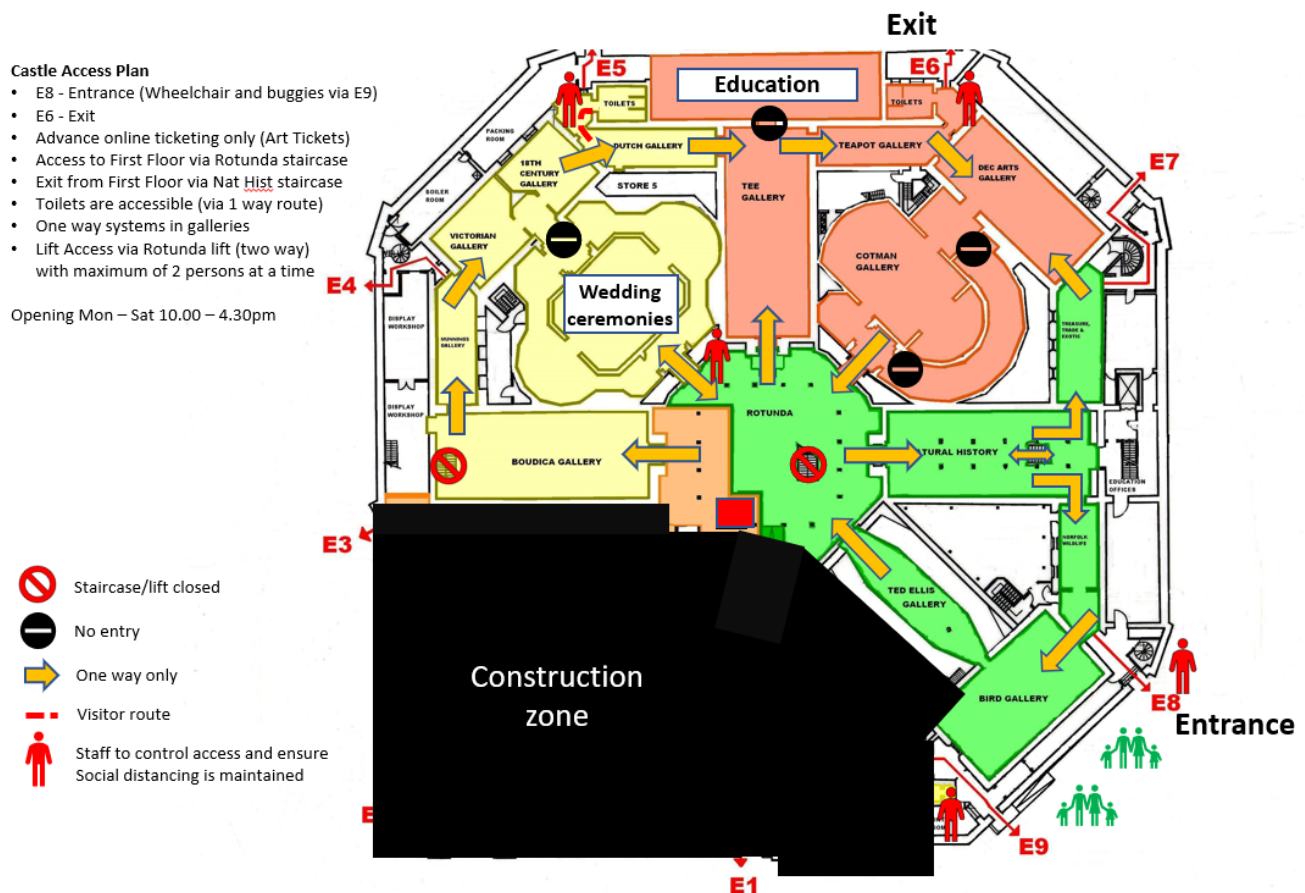


Samples of the COVID signage and floor markings in use at all NMS sites

Interactives have been covered or barriered off to reduce the possibility of cross-contamination. The numbers of tables and chairs have also been significantly reduced to further limit touch points and to help reduce the volume of cleaning required. There are also stickers placed on case fronts requesting that visitors do not touch the glass.

Hand sanitiser dispensers has been placed at strategic points throughout the museum. All visitors are requested to sanitise their hands upon entry, after visiting the toilet and prior to exiting the museum. Additional hand sanitiser units have also been installed at points in the museum where there are increased risks of visitors touching door handles or push plates. Visitor contact information is being recorded for the NHS Test & Trace scheme, including via the NHS COVID-19 app. Visitors are legally required to wear face coverings at all times whilst inside the museum, unless exempt.

Since the last Area Museums Committee meeting, visitors are also able to access the Timothy Gurney Gallery from the Natural History Gallery. In January the visitor experience will be further enhanced by the opening of the Royal Norfolk Regimental galleries. This will coincide with the opening of the new costume exhibition *Textile Treasures* that is planned to open on 4 January 2021.

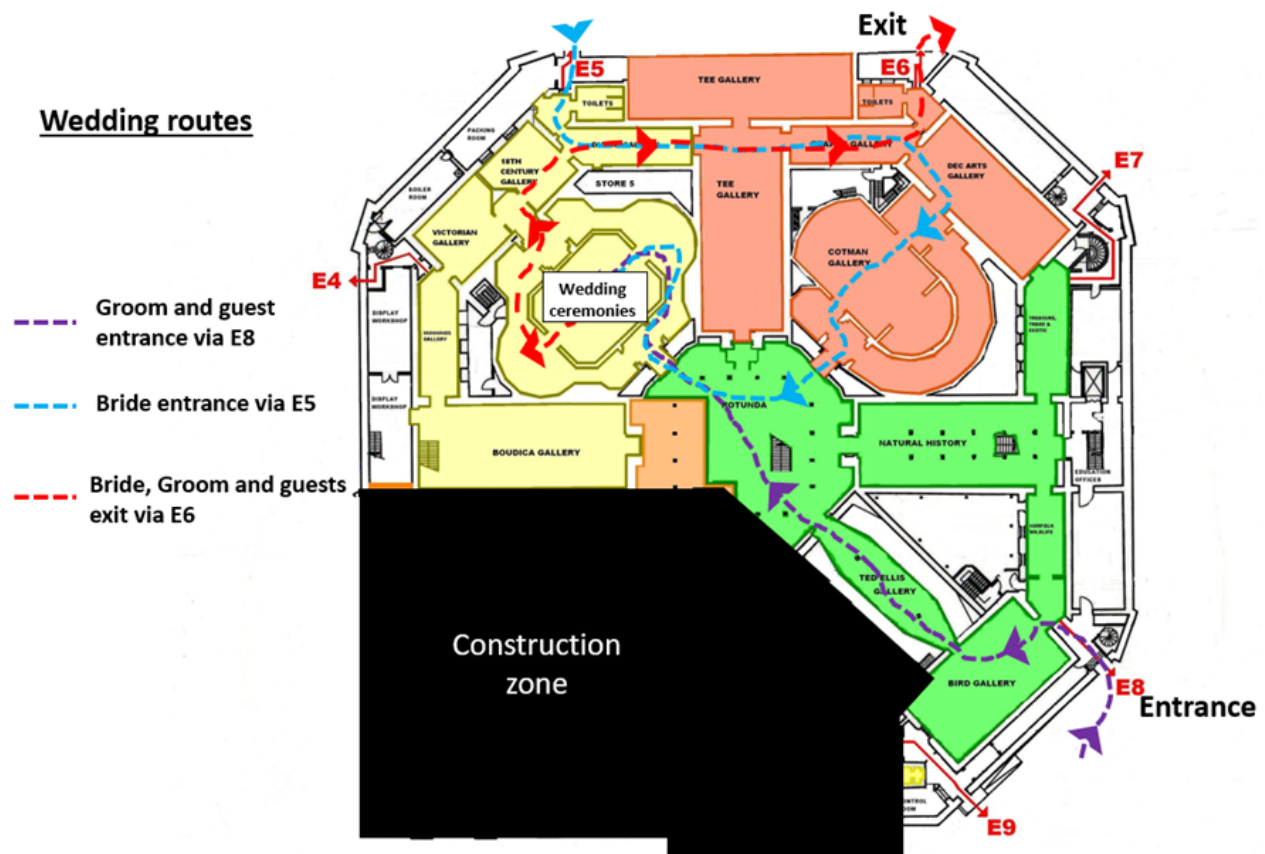


## 2.2. Wedding reopening arrangements

Weddings ceremonies - delivered in partnership with the Norfolk Registrars' service - recommenced at Norwich Castle on 25 July, with significant restrictions in accordance with Government guidelines. Wedding parties have been reduced in size to a maximum of 12 persons, including the couple.

The provision of wedding ceremonies ceased as part of the national lockdown from 5 November, with additional ceremonies scheduled for the days prior to lockdown commencing. Ceremonies are due to recommence on the 3 December, to coincide with the museum reopening.

In order to ensure the safety of staff, visitors and wedding parties, the groom and wedding guests enter the Castle via door E8 along with general visitors where they make their way to the Ceremony Room (Colman Gallery). The bride arrives by vehicle and enters the Castle via door E5. The bride is then interviewed prior to being taken (via the one-way system) through the Cotman Gallery into the Rotunda and then the Ceremony Room. Once the ceremony is complete, the entire wedding party vacate the Castle via the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Gallery, Dutch Gallery and via door E6. Only one wedding party is permitted on site at any one time. This enables staff to control the numbers of visitors and wedding guests and help reduce the possibility of queueing or congestion.



Plan of COVID-19 wedding routes at Norwich Castle



### **3. Norwich Learning Team activity – highlights report**

The Norwich Museums Learning Team have continued to develop and deliver programmes for established priority and target audiences through new modes of engagement. Staff have had to continue to develop new skills in order to reach audiences in new ways. To explore the programmes in more detail and get involved, please visit the *What's On* and *Learning at Home* pages of the Norwich Castle website: <https://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/norwich-castle>

#### **3.1 On-site Schools Recovery**

Staff have worked closely with the NCC Health, Safety and Wellbeing team to ensure that 'face-to-face' schools programmes could be planned to be COVID-secure and re-start at the three Norwich Museums. Approval to recommence the schools programme was achieved just days before the announcement that England would return to a national lockdown. All of the schools bookings in the diary were due to take place during the lockdown period and regrettably had to be cancelled.

The hard work of the learning team preparing for the return of schools will not be wasted. The team is ready to recommence the recovery process and restart the schools programme as soon as possible after the national lockdown ends. With the disruption that lockdown has brought to schools and the ongoing challenges for teachers looking to bring their pupils to the museums, and the end of term coming on 18 December, this realistically means working towards welcoming schools back in early January. Staff are actively promoting a COVID-secure programme, communicating with schools on the safety measures that have been introduced. Enquiries for on-site visits by schools are already being received for the spring term.

Staff anticipate that there will be an appetite amongst primary schools to visit the museums within the social distancing and other restrictions required, including a maximum number equating to a single class of 30 children. It is also anticipated that the necessary COVID security measures will increase the barriers to secondary schools visiting museums. Secondary school provision has been identified as a priority area within the learning programmes and an ongoing part of the recovery process will be to collaborate with other museum colleagues to find practical, safe and achievable ways to recommence a limited provision of facilitated events for secondary school pupils.

#### **3.2 Schools Digital and Virtual programmes**

Virtual outreach delivered direct to classrooms through digital platforms has now become part of the formal Norwich Museums learning offer. The team have launched a 'Virtual Schools' programme starting with three of the most popular primary level events – *Anglo-Saxons and Vikings*, *Ancient Egyptians*, and *Life in a Castle*. The Virtual programme provides the high-quality curriculum links, learning outcomes, and engagement opportunities that underpin the historic success of the Norwich Schools programme. Teachers are provided with pre-recorded films, an associated pack of resources and lesson plans, and the opportunity for a live-streamed 'Ask an Expert' session with learning staff (or alternatively questions answered by email for schools not wishing to participate in a live-streamed event). On the very first day of promoting the

virtual programme the team received a request for 61 year 3 pupils from St Francis Assisi school to take part in the *Anglo-Saxons and Vikings* session.



Additionally, schools can access stand-alone 'live-streamed' events (which are not accompanied by the pre-recorded videos and other resources). This way of working enables staff to respond quickly to schools' enquiries and needs. The current example of this being a successful way of working is 'Christmas in the Past' – a 30 minute live-streamed session with costumed characters and replica artefacts engaging children with Tudor and

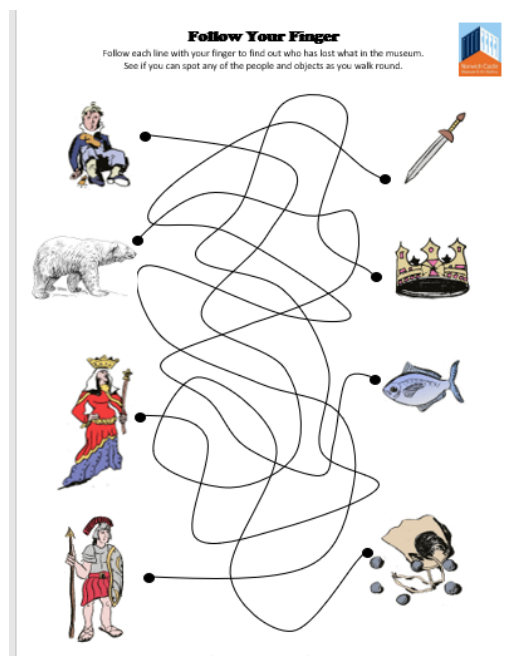
Victorian festive traditions. In the three days since promoting the event the team has received bookings from nine Norfolk primary schools for over 600 pupils to participate in the event during December.

### 3.3. Children and Family Activities

#### Early Years Family Activity Bags

Norwich Castle normally offers visitors aged 0-5 a bucket and a choice of small toys to take around the museum which link with collections. This is hugely popular, and recent research at the museum carried out by a postgraduate student from UEA demonstrated its effectiveness as a mechanism to support our youngest visitors to enjoy and relate to the displays. The 'bucket toys' rely on the sense of touch and are therefore not COVID-secure and have been removed from the current visitor offer.

As an alternative staff have developed a free COVID-secure activity bag which is given to early years children for use in the museum and which they take away with them. The activity bag contains a range of activities suitable for under-5s and their adult companions, stimulating open enquiry, object recognition, language development and conversation. Within 3 weeks all of the activity bags had been given out to visitors, so staff are reprinting and remaking the bags ready for museum reopening at the beginning of December – adding a festive twist at the same time.





### Make a Castle Zine

To support slightly older children (ages 7-11) and their adult companions visiting Norwich Castle, the current Teaching Museum Norwich Learning Trainee, Alex Day, developed, created and installed a 'Castle Zine' activity. With the required removal of many interactive elements from museums, this project was a cost-effective, self-led, COVID-secure activity

to help children enjoy and relate to the castle's collections, Alex's zine is simple, engaging, and individual to every visitor. It is printed on a good quality paper and provided free, with a pencil, to any child visiting the museum and wanting to have a go. Staff initially printed 200 copies, unsure of how many children might be visiting the museum in current circumstances. In the space of 3 weeks all 200 had been given out and enjoyed. Ready for re-opening after the current lockdown, Alex has revised and renewed the Zine ready for more visitors (children and adults alike) to use it whilst exploring the museum.



### October Half Term: In the Picture – Out of the Dark

October half term came at a challenging point in terms of the development of COVID restrictions and the learning team therefore needed to take forward planning for the event as both a digital and an in-person blended offer. The programme encouraged audiences at the castle and online to engage with a work of art in the collection which contains mysterious creatures from an imaginative spirit world: Marc Chagall *L'Artiste dans son Atelier* (The Artist in his Studio). The painting is displayed in the *Spotlight* exhibition in the Timothy Gurney Gallery, and as facilitated activities at the museum were not possible, signage was installed to encourage visitors to focus on the painting and access links to an online resource activity which continued the engagement away from the museum. See:

[In the Picture ...Out of the Dark - Norfolk Museums](#)



### Partnership Working: Let's All Create

The Norwich Learning team have been a central part of a Norwich-wide collaboration led by the Festival Bridge and Young Norfolk Arts. 'Let's All Create' aimed to create,




produce and distribute a winter creative pack for Norfolk children. Recognising the ongoing need of children experiencing forms of isolation and poverty, the group has maintained the emphasis on non-digital provision. The booklet contains three activities from the Norwich Castle learning team, all taken from successful past programmes. Through community partners current preparations are to distribute 10,000 activity booklets and 6,000 art parcels to households across the county. To reach even more children and families, a crowd-source fundraising campaign was launched on 23 November; the ambitious aim being to be able to produce and distribute 18,000 booklets (the number of children in Norfolk who receive free school meals). <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/make-it-merry>

### 3.4 Adult programmes: Castle Writers


The fourth in the series of monthly creative digital resources was made available in September. The episode was inspired by birds, representations and specimens, in the

museum's collections, including Maggie Hambling's *Heron in the Shadows* which has been on display in the Colman Project Space at Norwich Castle. Designed in partnership with author and tutor Amanda Addison and are suitable for adults and older young people to use in their own time at home [September - Norfolk Museums](#). Being delivered digitally via pdf resources on the museum website places challenges on being able to understand the reach and impact of the programme. As a result, staff have taken the decision to pause this series whilst its effectiveness is reviewed.

**Warm-up Exercise**

For each key word below, list five to ten words which come to mind. After you have added a few words for each key word, set a timer for five minutes. Use the time to write about birds, using some of the words from your list. This could be a paragraph of prose, or a verse or two of poetic form.

**bird** – example: of the air  
**wing** – example: aerodynamic  
**flight** – example: soar  
**nest/migrate** – example: home and away  
**feather** – example: fluffy



Maggi Hambling, *Heron in the Shallows* (2013), oil on canvas © The Artist

### **3.5 Keep Project Learning Activities - Archant Press Partnership**

This successful partnership has now moved to a second phase. In the EDP and Evening News for the past six weeks, or via Archant's online platforms, the team has showcased the main themes which will be at the centre of the British Museum Medieval Gallery – Work, Pray, Fight. Each theme has been taken across two weeks. The first week has been a half-page Q&A bringing to readers' attention some of the fascinating stories of the medieval world, our collections and upcoming activities that audiences can get involved with. The second week has been a 'fascinating facts' style article – including the 'The Five Most Interesting Medieval Jobs' and the often-asked question 'why does Norwich have so many churches?' [How many historic churches Norwich has and why | Norwich Castle | Eastern Daily Press \(edp24.co.uk\)](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/local/norwich-castle-archant-partnership-2020-10-22/)

As well as raising the profile of the Keep project, the partnership has provided a crucial pathway to helping people learn about the medieval past at a time when in-person learning opportunities for general audiences are not possible. Core objectives of the Keep project's Activity Plan are to engage more people and a wider range of people with heritage, particularly the medieval heritage of Norwich and Norfolk, and help them to understand and enjoy it. By maintaining the strong partnership with Archant, even in the circumstances of a national lockdown and museum closure, staff have continued to provide engaging learning opportunities for thousands of people, locally, regionally and – thanks to the international reach of digital channels – even globally.

### **4. Kick the Dust: Norfolk – lockdown project activity update**

The *Kick the Dust: Norfolk* project, funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund, has continued to engage with young people throughout the COVID-19 lockdown period. The project team have adapted their activities to support existing groups across Norfolk, in particular YMCA groups, using digital means.

From the start of the first national lockdown to the end of October there were a total of 1,392 interventions, involving 570 individual young people taking part in 673 hours of quality digital activity. 19 Kick the Dust groups have been taking part in 253 different digital activities across the county, with a further 11 YMCA groups involved in 90 heritage related activities plus an additional number engaging in activities left at their residences to complete independently during lockdown.

Total engagement numbers for the project from October 2018 to the end of October 2020 are 7,464 interventions, involving 2,285 individual young people taking part in 3,808 hours of quality activity. Of these interventions, 186 volunteering opportunities have been provided to 93 individual young people.

Of this activity 35% has been at 'Player' level, 47% at 'Shaper' level and 17% at 'Leader' level. Of these activities, 53% involve young people in leading and designing projects as well as acting as mentors to staff and other young people. Three young people currently sit on the Project Steering Group.

#### **4.1 Breakdown of participants**

This has changed considerably since lockdown due to the high number of YMCA clients project staff have been engaging with through the enhanced digital offer.

- 8% aged 11-13 years
- 12% aged 14-16 years
- 34% aged 17-19 years
- 22% aged 20-22 years
- 24% aged 23-25 years

#### **4.2 Target audiences** (some young people fall into more than one category)

- YMCA clients – 40%
- Secondary schools – 31%
- FE/HE – 23%
- Young people with mental health issues – 13%
- Outside of mainstream education – 8%
- Young Offenders at those at risk of offending – 6%
- Looked after children and adopted living at home - 8%
- SEND – 7%
- NEET – 4%
- Care Leavers – 2%
- New arrivals and refugees – 2%
- Pregnant young mums and teenage parents – 1%
- Young Carers – 2%

#### **4.3 Evaluation**

As part of the feedback, young people are asked how aware they are of the range of job roles available within NMS and the heritage sector and how they perceived museums in terms of being spaces for young people. 72% of young people stated they had little or no knowledge of job roles in NMS or the heritage sector before taking part and 92% felt that museums were a space they could use and would use in the future.

Evaluation responses from this Kick the Dust project can be compared with those from the other eleven Kick the Dust projects currently running across the UK. This programme- wide evaluation has been commissioned by the National Lottery Heritage Fund from the evaluation specialists Renaisi.

Following their engagement with our project:

- 87% of young people said they had learnt new and interesting things about heritage (Renaisi survey 90%);
- 82% of young people felt that heritage reflected them (Renaisi 70%)
- 95% felt heritage would engage other young people (Renaisi 89%).
- 81% of young people said they were more likely to become a volunteer as a result of their involvement in KTD and this option was the most popular with work experience for all those who took part. (Renaisi 61%)
- 100% of young people stated they felt welcomed and respected by staff and 100% felt a sense of achievement.

- 74% of young people stated they now had a better understanding of heritage having taken part in the programme with 26% stating they weren't sure and needed more engagement. (Renaissi 78%)
- 73% of young people felt they had the opportunity to influence decisions. (Renaissi 66%)
- 76% of young people felt that there were jobs for young people like themselves to work in heritage. (Renaissi 72%).
- 57% of young people felt that heritage had helped them understand more about their own lives – it had given them context
- 91% said they had found heritage more relevant than they had before embarking on their Kick the Dust journey (Renaissi 77%).
- 95% of young people felt that the programme was easy and affordable to get involved in but had concerns that they may not be able to do this in the future if there was a significant cost to them. (Renaissi 92%).

## **5. Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn – project update**

### **5.1 Impact of COVID-19**

Whilst the award of the main construction contract was delayed due to COVID-19, project progress was maintained during the first national lockdown, with both the internal and external project teams working remotely to develop detailed designs for the construction works and to discharge pre-commencement planning conditions. The principal contractor has robust COVID-secure health & safety procedures in place for all staff and sub-contractors.

### **5.2 Main construction works**

On 10 August, the Keep and surrounding site areas were formally handed over to the Principal Contractor, Morgan Sindall Construction following Contract Award for the main build. Internal and external secure hoardings have now been erected to demarcate the construction site and delineate the contractor compound on the mound. There is an additional contractor compound and deliveries access point in the Lower Castle Gardens. A tower crane has also now been installed on the mound. The internal hoarding line runs across the entrance to the Rotunda, separating the construction zone from the areas of the museum that will remain open to visitors throughout the project.

In addition to the establishment of the site and the erection of secure hoardings, initial construction works have focussed on the installation of new drainage routes under the Rotunda and the careful removal of flagstones from the Keep basement.

A verbal update on recent progress will be provided at the meeting.





The tower crane and entrance hoardings

## 6. Other lockdown activity

### 6.1 Museum of Norwich: Facebook Films

Curators at The Museum of Norwich have continued to engage with audiences digitally as the site remains closed for the time being. Thanks to a grant awarded by the Freemen of Norwich, stories and collections at the museum have been told in a series of short films, screened on Facebook. Over the summer months, the stories of Snap, the pharmacy collection and the history of chocolate were shared. Over the last three months, one film focused on a virtual tour of the undercroft, as part of the nationwide Heritage Open Days festival, another spotlighted the story of Samson, and lastly for half term, the contrasting lives of Ethel and Elfrida, who grew up in Norwich a century ago, were brought to life.



A virtual tour of the undercroft at the Museum of Norwich featured in a Facebook film as part of Heritage Open Days and was seen by over 32,000 people. To date, all six films have reached over 141,000 people on social media.



Gemma Roberts, presenting the stories, of Ethel and Elfrida, who both feature in museum displays

## 6.2 October Black History Month

The team at the Museum of Norwich marked Black History Month online, attending partner organisation events, and sharing stories of some of the collections which are displayed in the Museum of Norwich.

Staff joined forces with Proud Canaries to highlight a recent acquisition; a scarf marking Justin Fashanu's Goal of the Season strike against Liverpool in 1980. The scarf is designed by David Shenton and includes the words of commentator Barry Davies.



## 6.3 Picturing the Pandemic

Over the summer months, curators at the Museum of Norwich put a call out to the local community to collect objects, photographs and stories to ensure that the city's response to the pandemic could be captured and represented in the museum collections. Now, the process of carefully selecting objects offered to the museum is underway, along with making connections with some of the local people who offered to share their stories. These range from innovative products developed at the UEA, to home-based production lines set up to stitch masks and scrubs, to stories of communities rallying together to collect and distribute food parcels.



# Picturing the Pandemic



Local artist Owen Mathers' design for 'Picturing the Pandemic' was used to brand the project online.



Embroidered mask, with Latin inscription ('While I breath, I hope') donated by Felix Hewison-Carter and hospital scrubs made by Jo Woods, Norfolk Scrubs volunteer. At its peak, the group had over a thousand sewers across the county, who turned out over 3,500 scrubs for the NHS.

## 6.4 Strangers' Hall digital activity

Whereas normally Strangers' Hall would have seen people queuing for Heritage Open Days, the 2020 HODS invited people to step up to the front door and ring the bell virtually – and then to view a complete tour of the period rooms in the company of Elizabeth Buxton, the Elizabethan lady whose full-length portrait that hangs in the Great Hall. The tour, which features highlights from the collections and the garden as well as the building itself, was originally presented as the museum's access guide for visitors with limited mobility. With a script by Jenny Caynes and animation by Matthew Harrison, it can now be accessed on YouTube via of the NMS website. A special BSL signed version was also provided and attracted 52 views on YouTube over the eleven



day period with the subtitled version receiving 236 views and 11,129 Twitter engagements

Also part of the Strangers' Hall offer for HODS were three brand new films in the 'In the Picture' series, featuring personal responses of three members of the NMS learning team of three paintings hanging at Strangers' Hall designed to suggest ways of looking at paintings and stimulate personal enquiry. These attracted a total of 105 viewings on YouTube, and Twitter engagement of 1,105. The Facebook engagement for the HODS programme as a whole was 2,924 and the Strangers' Instagram feed received a total of 120 likes.

### **6.5 Strangers' Hall curatorial activity**

Curatorial priorities have included participation in Black History month, with research to the roles played by local activists and visiting Black speakers working towards the abolition of slavery in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Curators Cathy Terry and Bethan Holdridge are currently working with the Learning team to devise a method of live delivery of the popular 'Christmas in the Past' schools session with four sessions already booked, and with Kick the Dust 'Digital Buddies' to prepare an archive film presentation on the early days of Strangers' Hall. An on-line Advent calendar with daily posts on the origin and evolution of Christmas traditions will provide a festive presence in the run-up to Christmas, and Strangers' Hall will also transform one of its front windows as part of the Norwich City Council 'Selfie with an Elfie' initiative, a special trail to bring Christmas cheer to cultural venues forced to close as the result of COVID-19.

### **7. Norwich Curatorial update**

The Norwich specialist curators are continuing their work on exhibitions and displays while facing the challenges of working remotely, with very limited physical access to collections.

Curator of Historic Art Dr Giorgia Bottinelli is working on a major exhibition at Norwich Castle to commemorate the bicentenary of the death of the artist John Crome (1768-1821). Entitled *A Passion for Landscape: Rediscovering John Crome*, this show will run 23 April - 5 September 2021. This exhibition will be supported by the Friends of Norwich Museums as part of their 2021 centenary celebrations.

Crome founded the first art society in Britain outside London, the Norwich Society of Artists. The Society soon developed into the first exhibiting artists' society to hold an annual exhibition along the lines of the Royal Academy and later became internationally known as the Norwich School of Painting.

The show will include loans of paintings, drawings and etchings from public and private collections, to date including Yale Center for British Art, the British Museum, Tate, and the Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, among others. These loans will supplement Norwich Castle's own pre-eminent collection. The exhibition aims to illuminate Crome's status as a Master of British landscape painting. This will be the first major exhibition dedicated to Crome since 1968. It will reveal the twists and turns of Crome's reputation,

notably following his death in 1821, when his national reputation seemed set for posterity. An innovative aspect of this exhibition will be the technical analysis of Crome's painting technique, following on from work already undertaken on Norwich Castle's paintings. Throwing new light on Crome's painting technique will help with longstanding issues with the misattribution of his work. To accompany the exhibition, Georgia is working on a scholarly catalogue, for which she has recently been awarded a grant from the Paul Mellon Foundation. This has enabled her to enlarge the catalogue to 144 pages, and include more images, to enrich the legacy of this ground-breaking exhibition.



Two of John Crome's star works from NMS collections: *Yarmouth Jetty* and *Norwich River Afternoon*

Costume and Textiles Curator Ruth Battersby Tooke has been preparing for the *Textile Treasures* exhibition, which is scheduled to run 4 January – 28 March. This exhibition celebrates some of the best loved textiles in Norwich Castle's nationally important Costume and Textile collection. It showcases local connections and personal histories as told through textiles, created to provide comfort, care and self-expression.

The exhibition includes examples of patchwork, applique, and embroidery – the techniques traditionally used to make bedcovers. These pieces on show combine incredible artistry with emotional resonance, offering an insight into the lives of ordinary people. With themes of collaborative creativity, gift-giving, recycling, friendship, family and love, the exhibition is even more relevant after the experiences of the past few months. The textiles are presented on open display, not behind glass, offering visitors a uniquely intimate view of pieces which are not usually on show to the public. The exhibition invites visitors to connect with the past and make links with their own lives.

Many of the bedcovers on show have national significance: some have been loaned to institutions such as Tate Britain, and many have been referenced in well-known studies of quilting in Britain including *Quilt Treasures of Britain* from The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles.



Artwork made by Barbara Symonds, a resident of Barrington Farm, a residential home for adults with Learning Disabilities, and Antonia Riviere, working at Barrington Farm as an artist facilitator. The work was made collaboratively, with each artist embroidering a section and the other responding to the embroideries

Curator of Natural History Dr David Waterhouse has been working on the forthcoming *More in Common* exhibition with the team at Gressenhall, in conjunction with Norfolk Wildlife Trust. He is also preparing for a display of fossils in the British Wildlife Gallery and associated events in connection with the forthcoming loan of Dippy the Diplodocus in Norwich Cathedral during 2021. David continues to work on aspects of the Deep History Coast project, including a book, events, training in fossil identification and CPD for teachers. He is also preparing a film on butterfly collector Margaret Fountaine and other aspects of the natural history collection for the Castle's Youtube channel.

Curator of the Regimental Collections Kate Thaxton is preparing for a stores re-organisation, once site access is possible. Kate is also working on a comprehensive refresh of the Regimental Museum's website, and is also putting together a decolonisation programme for other museums, with the Army Museums Ogilby Trust

Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art Dr Rosy Gray is working on the Open Art Show together with colleagues from EAAF. This is programmed for the Timothy Gurney Gallery to coincide with the Crome Bicentenary exhibition. To harmonise with the subject matter of the Crome exhibition the theme of the Open Art Show is landscape, and the working title is *Somewhere unexpected*. Rosy is also working on an exhibition for the Timothy Gurney Gallery for the following year with contemporary artist Yelena Popova, concerning the Sizewell power station and the coast and its geology. She also continues to work on the forthcoming exhibition with the Singh Twins, *Slaves of Fashion*, presently programmed for 2022.

Senior Curator of Norwich Museums and Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art Dr Francesca Vanke has given a Zoom lecture on the newly acquired Paston *pietre dure* table-top to 150 people for the Furniture History Society. She has put some of her new research into blog posts and an entry for the Google Arts and Culture institute. She is writing an entry about the *Paston Treasure* painting for the Google Arts and Culture Institute. Francesca has also written a blog post for Black History Month about new Dutch research into Rembrandt's portrayals of black people.

Francesca recently oversaw the loan of Turner's *Walton Bridges* to Colchester Castle, where it is on display until March 2021. She is writing a series of blog posts about the picture and is working with the learning team on online versions of the planned activity programme for the painting next year when it comes back to Norwich. She is also researching for the planned Turner exhibition in Lynn Museum in summer 2022 and recently put together a display of bird-themed decorative arts for the Ted Ellis gallery.



Micro-mosaic bird-themed jewellery, 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ted Ellis Gallery

## 8. Visitor numbers

Since reopening to the public on 24 August there have been 3,185 pre-booked visits to the Castle. The monthly breakdown is as follows:

|                  | Visitors | Comments  |
|------------------|----------|---|
| <b>August</b>    | 244      | Opened to Museum Pass holders only on 24 August |
| <b>September</b> | 243      | Museums Pass holders and Friends only           |
| <b>October</b>   | 2414     | Opened to general visitors from 16 October      |
| <b>November</b>  | 284      | Open for 2 days prior to Lockdown #2            |

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